

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, CO
SUBJ: MARIJUANA IN THE GUAJIRA

1. AFTER ADDITIONAL ON-SITE INSPECTION, GOC OFFICIALS
ESTIMATE ACREAGE UNDER MARIJUANA CULTIVATION "OFFICIALLY"
DISCOVERED IN SINGLE SECTOR OF GUAJIRA AT 200-250 HECTARES
RATHER THAN 1,500 HECTARES ORIGINALLY REPORTED IN PRESS AND
TV. MARIJUANA PLOTS, THE LARGEST APPROXIMATELY 25 HECTARES,
ARE INTERSPERSED AMONG OTHER CROPS. BECAUSE OF THIS DISPERSION
AND BECAUSE OF LEGAL AND POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED, GOC
HAS, ACCORDING TO EXECUTIVE-SECRETARY OF NATIONAL COUNCIL ON
DANGEROUS DRUGS (NCDD), DECIDED AGAINST USE OF HERBICIDES
FOR ERRADICATION OF THE MARIJUANA. INSTEAD, MECHANICAL
EQUIPMENT AND ANY NECESSARY MANPOWER IS TO BE USED.

2. INTERESTING DEVELOPMENT IS APPARENT INVOLVEMENT OF
COLOMBIAN MILITARY IN ANTI-MARIJUANA OPERATIONS IN GUAJIRA.
ACCORDING TO PRESS AND TV AS WELL AS NCDD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,
MILITARY IS CONDUCTING PATROLS TO LOCATE FURTHER MARIJUANA
FIELDS AS WELL AS MANNING ROAD BLOCKS AND PATROLLING COAST
TO PREVENT SHIPMENT OF MARIJUANA. GIVEN STATE OF NEAR
ANARCHY IN GUAJIRA, USE OF MILITARY IS VIRTUALLY ESSENTIAL
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FOR EVEN MODESTLY SUCCESSFUL OPERATION AGAINST TRAFFICKERS.

3. FUROR IN WAKE OF EXAGGERATED REPORT OF DISCOVERY HAS
HAD EFFECT OF FOCUSING OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC ATTENTION ON
EXTENT AND SOPHISTICATION OF MARIJUANA PRODUCTION. MODERN
AGRICULTURAL METHODS AND EQUIPMENT USED AS WELL AS READILY
AVAILABLE FINANCING FROM TRAFFICKING ELEMENTS IN U.S. ARE

FREQUENTLY CITED. PARTICULAR PROBLEMS OF GUAJIRA INCLUDING NECESSITY OF CROP SUBSTITUTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY ARE ALSO RECEIVING ATTENTION AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ARE PLANNING ACTION.

4. WITH RECOGNITION OF EXTENT OF MARIJUANA CULTIVATION THERE IS FEELING OF FUTILITY APPARENT. SHOCK OF 1,500 HECTARE REPORT WAS THAT THAT MUCH ACREAGE WAS UNDER MARIJUANA CULTIVATION IN ONLY ONE SMALL AREA OF THE GUAJIRA AND NOT IN THE GUAJIRA AS A WHOLE, WHERE IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE MARIJUANA IS VERY EXTENSIVELY GROWN. AT THAT, ACCORDING TO SOME KNOWLEDGEABLE COLOMBIANS, MORE MARIJUANA IS PRODUCED IN OTHER AREAS OF COUNTRY THAN IN THE GUAJIRA. FACED WITH MAGNITUDE OF PROBLEM AND LACKING ANY REAL ZEAL. ANTI-MARIJUANA CAMPAIGN IS UNLIKELY TO LAST LONG OR ACCOMPLISH MUCH.

5. ORIGINALLY, THE U.S. MISSION WAS ASKED FOR INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE METHODS OF ERADICATION AND THERE WERE EXPLORATORY INQUIRIES AS TO THE POSSIBILITY OF U.S. ASSISTANCE. IN VIEW OF SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS AND APPARENT GOC DECISIONS, THERE HAS BEEN NO GOC FOLLOW-UP ON THOSE INQUIRIES, AND THE PROBABILITY THAT THERE WILL BE IS FADING. MISSION ON OTHER HAND SEES NO ADVANTAGE TO BE GAINED FROM ATTEMPTING TO PRESS ANY ASSISTANCE ON GOC.
DREXLER

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